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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8274
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1730
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 1236
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2140
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1527
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 001423

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ OPPOSITION CALLS FOR DEMONSTRATION, AGAIN

REF: A. BISHKEK 1302

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 1333

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 626

[1](#)D. BISHKEK 796

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Classified By: Charge Lee Litzenberger, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On September 29, the "For Reforms" opposition movement announced it would organize a mass demonstration beginning on November 2 to demand the resignation of President Bakiyev and Prime Minister Kulov, unless the government meets a growing list of opposition demands, including constitutional reform and an end to corruption, by the end of October. Opposition leaders appear re-energized, especially after recent heavy-handed government crackdowns on Islamic extremists in the south, a provocative move against former Speaker of Parliament Tekebayev, and the muddled constitutional reform process. Reminiscent of the situation last spring, neither the government nor the opposition seems prepared to resolve the growing political stalemate in a constructive manner. END SUMMARY.

FEEDING THE OPPOSITION

[1](#)2. (C) The Kyrgyz political opposition has used recent events -- increased crackdowns against alleged religious extremists in the Ferghana Valley; personal attacks against current and former parliamentarians, including the scandal surrounding former Speaker Tekebayev (ref a); and direct attacks on the press -- in an effort to rally support for their ultimate cause: to remove Bakiyev and, possibly, Kulov from the Kyrgyz White House and replace them with "their own." Leading up to and, most notably, following the September 17 Kurultai (ref b), opposition groups have re-energized their efforts to demand immediate and concrete reforms from the Bakiyev administration. Citing their belief that the government has had more than enough time to meet the many demands put forth during the demonstrations last April and May (refs c and d), the opposition, led by the For Reforms (Za Reformi) movement, has begun to focus on another mass demonstration, planned for November 2. Similar to the

ultimatums issued by the opposition in the past, opposition leaders are describing the November 2 rally as one last chance for the Kyrgyz Government (GOKG) to shape up, or ship out.

13. (C) For Reforms includes a number of influential figures, including former Trade Minister Almaz Atambayev, Deputy Melis Eshimkanov, and Deputy Temir Sariyev, all of whom were allies of Bakiyev when he was in the opposition. Deputy Azimbek Beknazarov is also flirting with joining the movement. For Reforms leaders feel confident that it could successfully take the reins and expeditiously implement its own demands, should the government fail to do so itself. As Almaz Atambayev told the Ambassador on October 3, the opposition plans to negotiate with the government over the next month. If the opposition's demands are not met, the opposition hopes to force the government's resignation, create an interim government, push through the reforms promised in March 2005, and only then hold presidential elections. He claimed the opposition has already developed strategies on issues such as constitutional reform and strengthening relations with Kyrgystan's neighbors, as well as Russia, and is, therefore, able either to share its ideas with the government or to take over if the GOKG is not willing to cooperate. What the opposition has not done is create a strategy that will ensure the departure of Bakiyev and Kulov. When asked why the two would resign voluntarily, the opposition simply says they must and that the opposition is ready to "die for the cause" -- although it will not take up arms itself. Atambayev went on to speculate that the government is probably trying to figure out how to "rub out" opposition leaders, like himself, rather than how best to collaborate with the opposition before the November 2 deadline. With that less-than-optimistic approach, opposition leaders have continued to voice their concerns regarding the government's

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ability to reorient the country towards the democratic ideals that sparked the March 2005 "revolution" and Bakiyev's rise to power.

14. (C) In separate meetings, with former Ambassador to the U.S. Roza Otunbayeva and Almaz Atambayev, the Ambassador noted that forcing political change with ultimatums may not be helpful for the country's long-term stability or for implementing the kind of reforms the opposition says they want to implement. In response, both Otunbayeva and Atambayev agreed, but felt that new leadership is needed nonetheless. Otunbayeva claimed that the Kyrgyz people are ready for change and will, as a result, rally behind the opposition to support its aims, should the need arise. Atambayev said that the opposition would like to maintain stability by allowing the current administration to reform itself and the country, but the GOKG has been unwilling to implement much needed reforms. Instead, the government has attacked independent media outlets, allowed the SNB to be taken over by foreign elements, and condoned the actions of criminal groups that have been used by the GOKG to suppress the opposition, according to Atambayev. As a result, said Atambayev, the people have willingly rallied behind the opposition in order to ensure that change does occur, and stability is created.

A BEWILDERED GOVERNMENT

15. (C) Foreign Policy Advisor Ermek Ibraimov, who is usually calm and optimistic, reflected his disappointment in the leadership during a September 25 meeting with the Ambassador. He complained that the government spends roughly seventy percent of its time trying to clean up its own mistakes. Citing the scandal surrounding Tekebayev, Ibraimov said that the government is still trying to put out fires that have been burning since the summer and is unable to move forward on a constructive agenda. He noted that Chief of Staff Abdildayev is having "a hard time" and there are worrying

trends in the White House. He concluded by stating that the Tekebayev scandal would have repercussions into November. New Executive Secretary of For Reforms Omurbek Abdarakhmanov, who has enjoyed good relations with the President and the White House apparat, told the Ambassador the President said on October 3 that he was unwilling to negotiate and unwilling to compromise with the opposition. Speaker of the Parliament Marat Sultanov told the Ambassador that he would meet with the President on October 5 and encourage him to make concessions to the opposition, as the President is "the stronger" of the two parties.

THE MANY IN THE MIDDLE

16. (C) A number of Parliamentarians, including Iskhak Masaliyev, who has strong ties to the opposition as well as the President, have also expressed their doubt in the GOKG's ability to stabilize the country, create stronger bonds with Parliament, and build collaborative relations with the opposition. Masaliyev told the Ambassador that serious issues, including religious extremism, rising ethnic tension in the south, and constitutional reform are being ignored by Bakiyev. Convinced that former president Akayev's undemocratic tactics are continuing to be used by the current administration, Masaliyev said that many believe Akayev's supporters remain in power. As a result, the people's confidence in the government is waning. Masaliyev asserted, however, that Kyrgyzstan's citizens would stick by their president, to show their support for a stable, unified government. Calling for Bakiyev's resignation and a complete reshuffle in the government, according to Masaliyev, is counterproductive and ill-timed. He observed that Kyrgyz society is not ready for yet another revolution. Rather, citizens should work within the system already in place to create better relations between the executive and legislative branches, said Masaliyev. Doing so will, in his view, enable the government to meet opposition demands and, in doing so,

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improve Kyrgyzstan's image.

COMMENT: DEJA VU OR SOMETHING NEW?

17. (C) This latest call for action by the opposition reveals two realities: one, that opposition leaders think the Kyrgyz are growing impatient with the GOKG's apparent inability to implement needed reforms; and two, that those within the opposition who have not been co-opted by the government are hungry for power themselves. The GOKG's floundering reaction to the opposition's demands has, as a result, helped the leaders of the somewhat floundering opposition convince themselves that they may, in fact, have a chance to succeed in taking over the government next month. Much like the events that transpired before the demonstrations last April, it looks like both sides are heading toward confrontation, but will most likely pull back from the brink and continue to muddle through. The irony is that both the opposition and the government may be operating under misconceptions. The opposition plan is based on the uncertain assumption that the people will take to the streets and, if they do, that Bakiyev (and Kulov) will resign. Bakiyev, for his part, seems overly confident that he can ignore with impunity the opposition's call for reforms. The resulting political stalemate has raised tensions here, but gives no clear indication whether Bakiyev or the opposition will come out on top.

LITZENBERGER